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LOWER SALMON RIVER GUIDE



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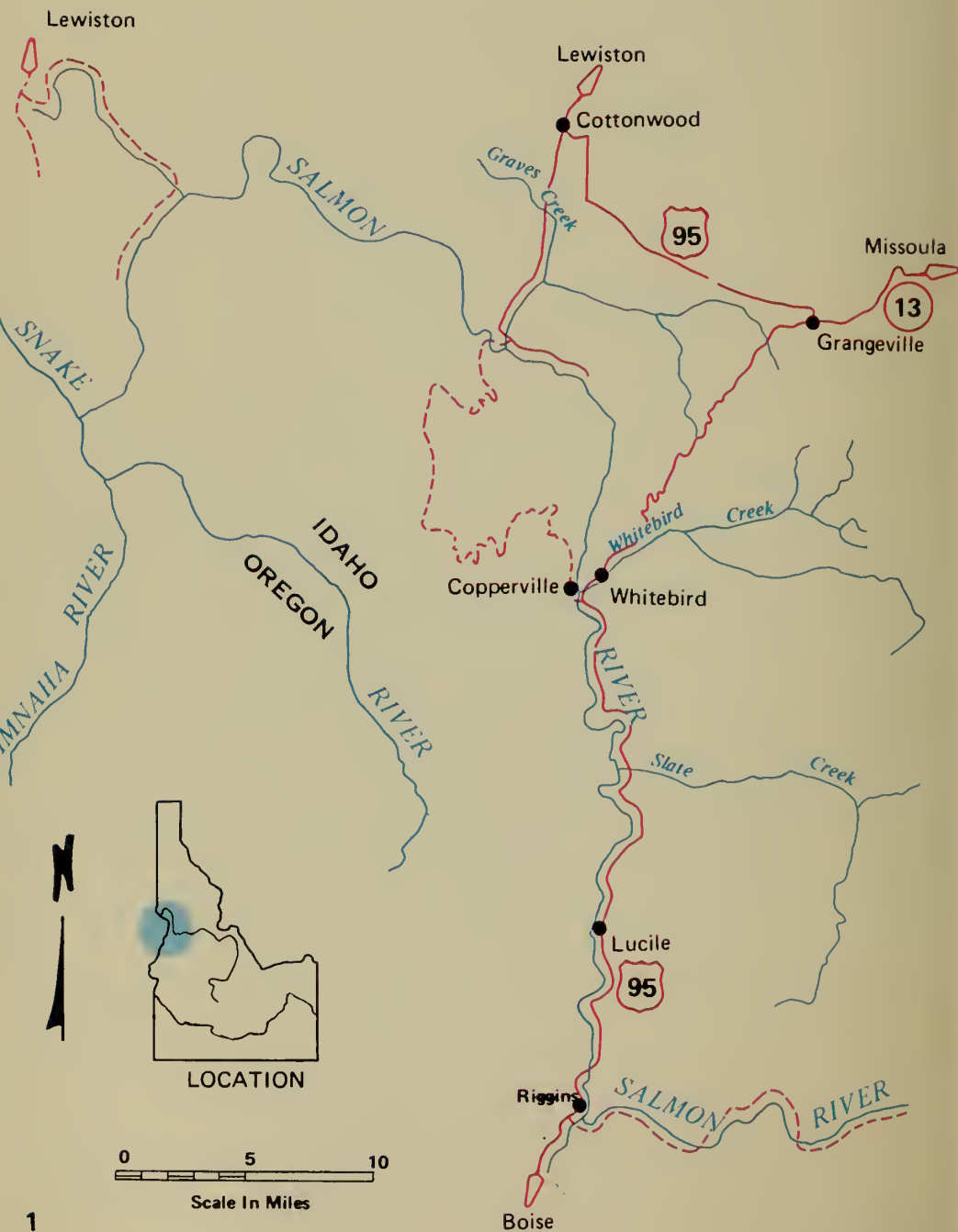
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LOWER SALMON RIVER

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Traveling on a white water river can be dangerous. This danger and the uncertainty of a trip's successful completion generates excitement. No river guide can remove all of the danger and render the river safe for all to travel upon, nor should it, because then it would remove all the excitement from the experience. Rivers are dynamic and change every day. Floods can move huge rocks and change a rapid. Fluctuating water levels can make a rapid easy one day and difficult the next. The rapid ratings themselves are your best guide to any river. The validity of this guide is limited to a water flow of 4000 - 10000 cubic feet per second (c. f. s.).

There are many different systems in use today for rating river difficulty. An International Scale of River Difficulty has been established and is the one used here. The system uses Roman Numerals from I to VI with I being the easiest. The following are general descriptions of each rating:

Class I

Moving water, perhaps a few small waves, few or no obstacles.

Class II

Some eddies, small waves, and slight turbulence; some maneuvering required; some obstructions.

Class III

Some fairly powerful eddies, medium-sized waves; considerable maneuvering required; routes sometimes require scouting from shore.

Class IV

Large and irregular waves; powerful hydraulics: routes that require precise maneuvering in such turbulence; runout often poor; scouting from shore often necessary; rescue difficult.

Class V

Either very long or very mean, usually wild turbulence capable for example of picking up boat and boater and throwing them several feet; extremely congested routes which nearly always must be scouted from shore; rescue difficult and some dangers to life in event of a mishap.

Class VI

Worse than Class V. If you are competent to handle this water you can also identify it. Water of Class VI difficulty involves substantial hazard to life. Few people actually run this class of water.

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Not all rapids that exist on the river are mentioned in the river guide. Most Class I and Class II rapids have been omitted. Use good judgment when approaching any whitewater. Do not attempt water that is too difficult for you.

Camp spots are numerous and more exist than are mentioned in the guide. About 35% of the land along the river is privately owned. Respect these private land owners' rights.

Put-in or Take-out Points:

- 1) Spring Bar Boat Landing – River Mile 96, U.S.F.S., Large camping area and boat launch. Some trips on the main Salmon take out here. Below here to Riggins there are two good rapids.

Ruby Rapids, Class III River Mile 94

Lake Creek Rapids, Class IV River Mile 93

- 2) Shorts Bar Boat Landing – River Mile 83½, private land, no facilities.
- 3) Riggins Public Boat Launch – River Mile 82½, no overnight camping or parking.
- 4) BLM Lucile Campground – River Mile 74, good for small boats.
- 5) Slate Creek Wayside – River Mile 62½, State Highway Department, boat launch.
- 6) BLM Skookumchuck Recreation Site – good for small boats. River Mile 55½.
- 7) White Bird bridge – good for small boats, River Mile 52.
- 8) BLM Pine Bar Campground – River Mile 41, good for small boats.
- 9) BLM Eagle Creek Campground – River Mile 12, bad access road, good for small boats.
- 10) Grande Ronde River – Snake River Mile 169½, Washington Fish and Game Department, good launch ramp.

*NOTE: River mile posts mark the miles from the confluence of the Salmon with the Snake River. Miles are marked upstream from the mouths of the Salmon and Snake Rivers to locate points on the streams.

STRIP MAP LEGEND

Scale: 1 Inch Equal 1 Mile



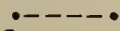
National Resource Lands



Direction of Stream Flow



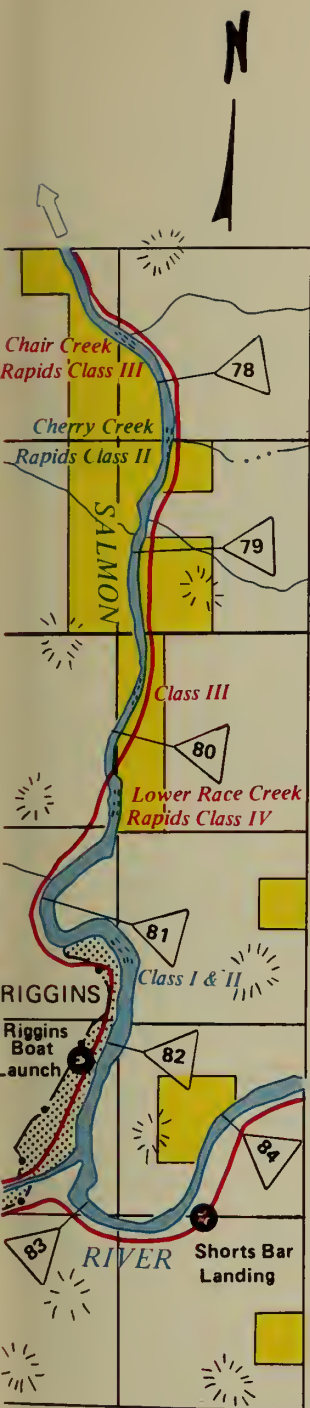
River Mile Post



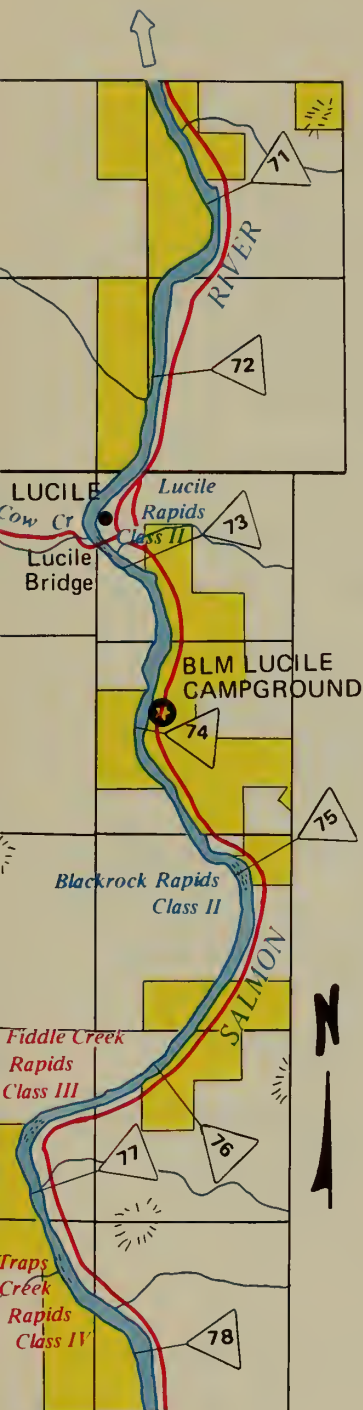
Powerline



Roads



River Miles		Miles from Riggins
77½	Chair Creek Rapids. Class III. Large rock on right, hole on far left.	4½
78½	Cherry Creek Rapids. Class II.	3½
79½	Class III rapids. Left is extremely rocky , and chute on right has some large fun waves.	2½
80½	Lower Race Creek Rapids. Long Class IV. Spot it by the highway bridge just below the rapids. Scout from left. It starts with a sharp drop and chute on far left followed in a few hundred feet by a long string of large tricky waves on the left.	1½
81½	A series of Class I and II rapids as the river leaves Riggins and makes an "S" curve.	½
82	Riggins Public Boat Launch. No overnight parking or camping allowed.	0
82½	Riggins and Little Salmon River.	0
83½	Short Bar Boat Landing.	1½



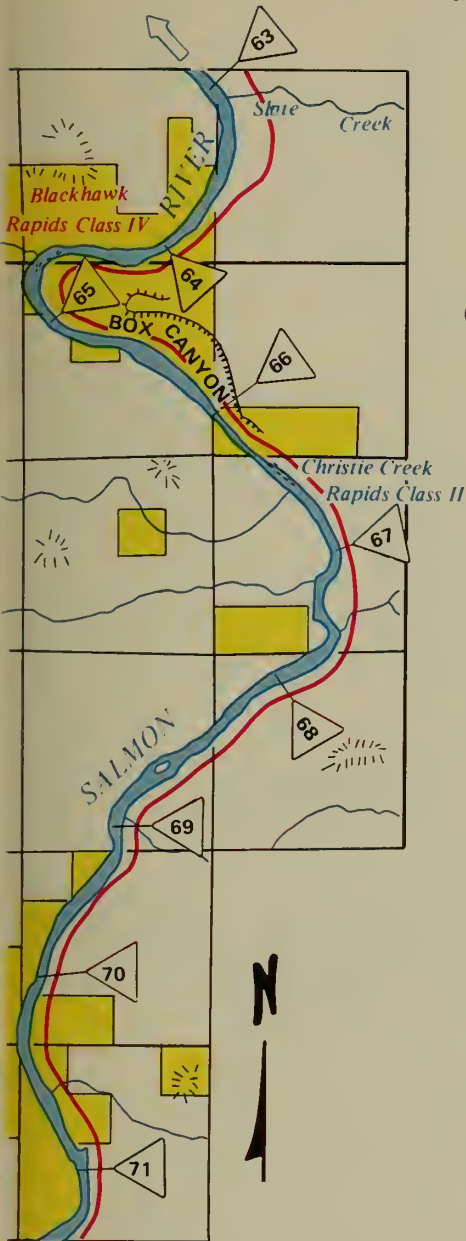
River
Miles

Miles
from
Riggins

- | | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 73 | Lucile Bridge and Lucile Rapids. Class II. Most of the rapids from here to White Bird are shallow gravel bars with small choppy waves. | 9 |
| 74 | BLM Lucile Campground on right across from dark gray cliffs. Sand beach, some shade and outhouses available. Historic mining area. | 8 |
| 75 | Blackrock Rapids. Class II. Marked by a cliff of dark gray rock that can be seen behind rapids. | 7 |
| 76½ | Fiddle Creek Rapids. Class III rock garden. Most difficult in high water. | 5½ |
| 77½ | Traps Creek Rapids. Class IV. Large irregular waves, some huge holes. Quite congested in lower water. Can be scouted from the beach on left. Numerous sand bars from here to White Bird afford campspots. The highway is on the east side of river making camping here somewhat noisy. | 4½ |

River
Miles

Miles
from
Riggins



63 Slate Creek on right.

19

64½ Blackhawk Rapids. Class IV "Rock Garden". Center is almost solid rock. Route on far left has very dangerous hole, current piles into cliff at bottom causing strong eddy. Route on far right has many rocks and precise maneuvering is required. Best to scout this one. It is followed closely by another cluttered rock garden.

17½

66½ Christie Creek Rapids. Class II rock garden, route on far left or far right. Marks the entrance to Box Canyon which lasts for about 2 miles.

15½



River
Miles

Miles
from
Riggins

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 54½ Deer Creek Rapids, Class II. Gravel Bar. Channel to the left of island has a sharp drop with many rocks. | 27½ |
| 55½ BLM Skookumchuck Recreation Site on right. Sandy beach, some shade, and outhouses available. | 26½ |
| 59 Highway bridge and end of Horseshoe bend. | 23 |
| 61½ Highway bridge and start of Horseshoe bend. | 20½ |
| 62½ Slate Creek Wayside on right. Boat launch and toilets available. | 19½ |



River Miles		Miles from Riggins
48½	Campspot on the left following some large black rocks on the left shore. The campsite is followed immediately by another large one on the left.	33½
50	Rollercoaster Rapids. Class II, a string of huge, enjoyable waves, followed by several fair campspots.	32
52	Whitebird Bridge. This is a useable put-in for small boats. Parties with larger boats or parties planning to spend some time at the put-in should start about four miles upstream at the BLM campsite at Skookumchuck Creek. Just below the Whitebird Bridge are rapids with holes on the far right.	30



River
Miles

Miles
from
Riggins

41½ Demons Drop. Class III. Big rock in the left center at the top. 40½

43 Wright-Way Drop. Class III. Sharp drop with big waves. Avoid the wall on the left at the bottom. You may wish to scout quickly. This is followed in about 100 yards by a long Class III rapids. 39

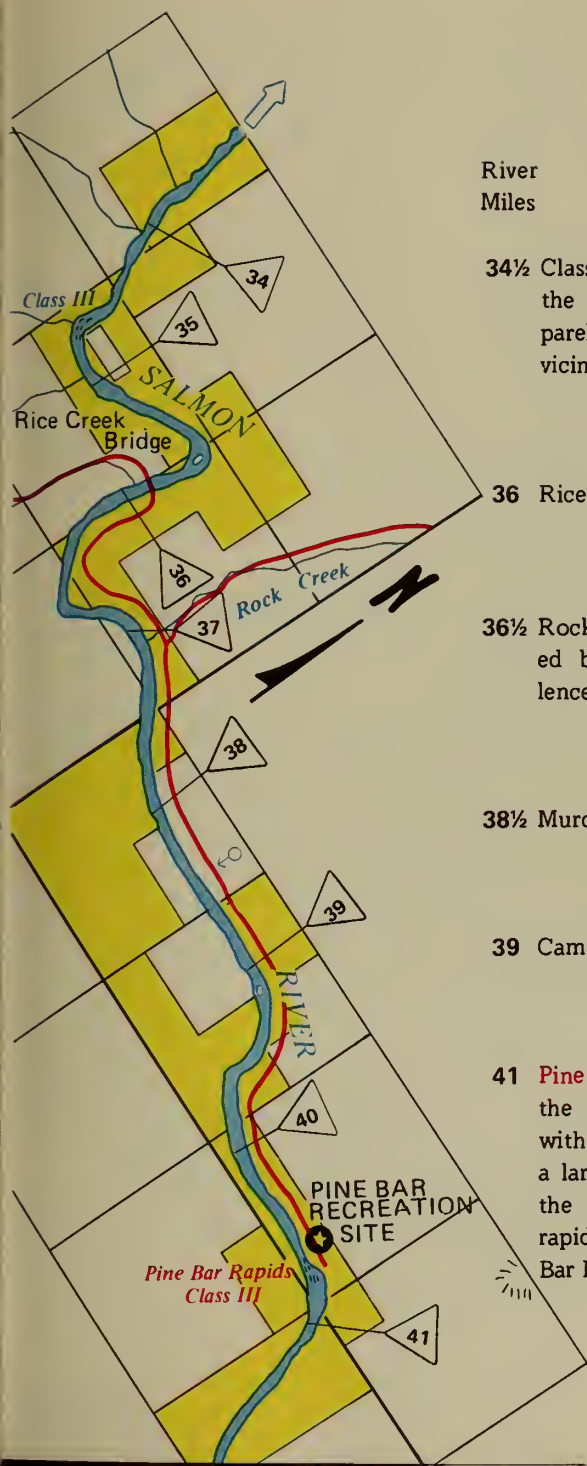
43½ Class III rapids. 38½

43½ Shorts Bar and cabin on the right. This is the last large spot to camp until the end of the Green Canyon. The Green Canyon starts immediately after Shorts Bar. It is a scenic, narrow canyon with fairly steep rock walls, lasting 2 to 3 miles, containing four Class III rapids. 38½

45 Campspots on the left and right. 37

47 Class II rapids with a play spot at the bottom. 35

47½ Campspot with a possible spring. 34½



River Miles	Miles from Riggins
34½ Class III rapids followed by a cabin on the right. The dirt road that has been paralleling the river ends in this vicinity.	47½
36 Rice Creek Bridge.	46
36½ Rock Creek on the right. It is followed by a Class II rapids with turbulence.	45½
38½ Murdock's Spring on the right.	43½
39 Campspot on the left with pine trees.	43
41 Pine Bar Rapids, Class III. Scout on the right. Steep rock garden littered with boulders and holes. Recognize by a large sand bar on the right. This is the end of the Green Canyon. The rapids is followed by the BLM Pine Bar Recreation Site on the right.	41



River Miles		Miles from Riggins
27	Class III rapids followed by two small campsites on the right.	55
28	Lorna's Lulu. Class III rapids with good waves. Campsite on the left at the bottom.	54
29½	Class II rapids with a wall followed by a Class III rapids.	52½
30½	Telcher Creek on the right.	51½
32	Cougar Canyon starts with a Class III rapids followed by another Class III rapids. The narrow canyon lasts for several miles and contains a few campsites.	50
32½	Campspot on the right. The last campspot before Cougar Canyon.	49½
33½	Campspot on the right.	48½

River
Miles

Miles
from
Riggins

22½ Class II drop with a large vertical rock face coming into view below it on the right bank. 100 yards of fast current brings you to **Snow Hole Rapids**.

23 **The Gobbler**. This is a straight forward **Class III** unless you get gobbled by the tempermental wave that sometimes appears.

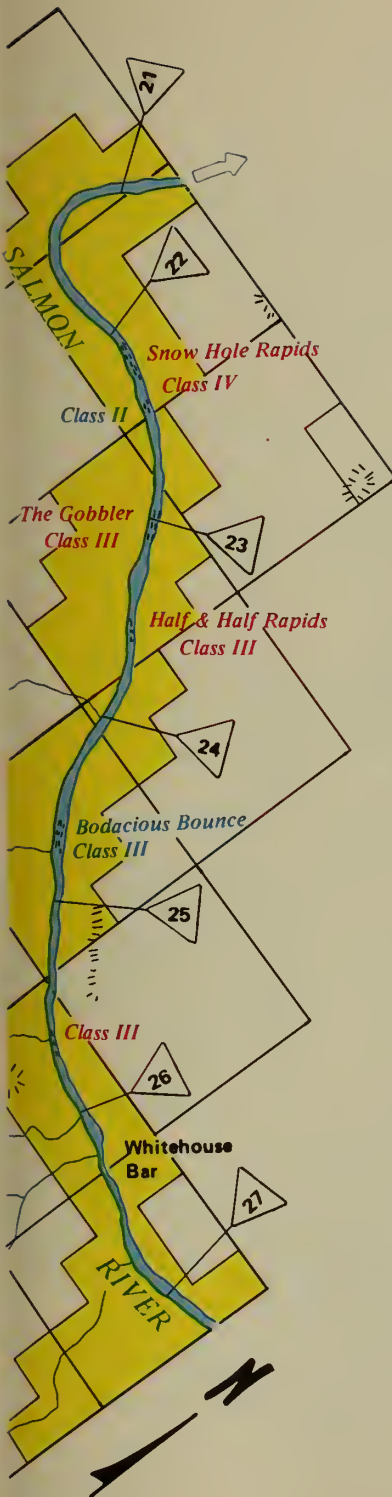
23½ **Half & Half Rapids**, (Half the time you make it!) **Class III**. Some big holes, requires a little maneuvering in heavy water.

24½ **Bodacious Bounce**. **Class III** rapid with huge fun waves.

25½ **Class III** rapids with a huge hole on the far right.

26½ **Snow Hole Canyon**. Narrow canyon with challenging rapids and no campspots for several miles.

26½ **Whitehouse Bar** on the right. Large beach. The last large campspot before **Snow Hole Canyon**. The best landing spot is at the lower end of the beach.



River
Miles

Miles
from
Riggins

16½ Cabins on the right just after a campspot on the left. They are followed by several campspots on both sides, however, much of the land along the left side, until you enter Blue Canyon, is privately owned.

65½



18½ Small beach on the left followed by **China Rapids**. There is a **Class III** route on the far left. This is a **blind rapid** and it is safest to stop at the beach and scout it. It contains some dangerous holes in the center and on the right.

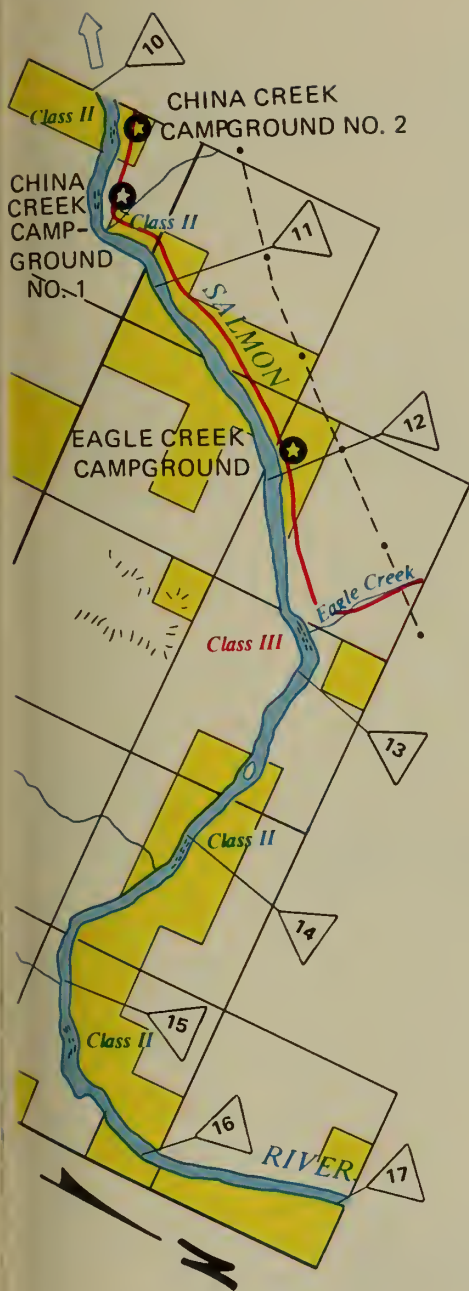
63½

19 Maloney Creek. Fairly large sand bar on private land to the right. Good marker for China Rapids.

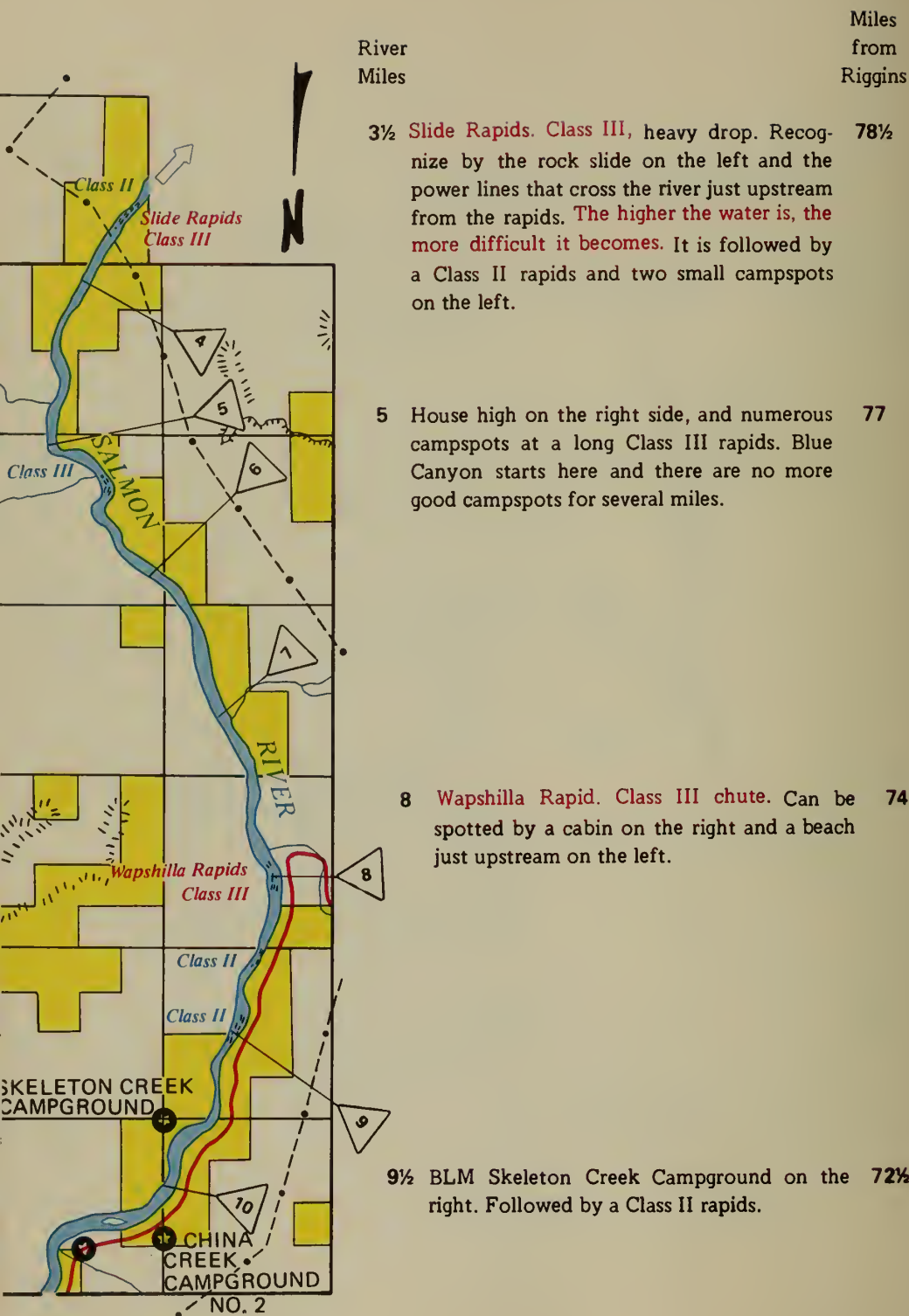
63

22 **Snow Hole Rapids**. Scout from the left side. **Class IV**. **Very dangerous** if run in the wrong spot. If you are in the right spot, the run is reasonably straight forward. Steep drop with huge boulders and holes. The chute is just to the right of center. The drop cannot be portaged or lined without great difficulty at flows over 6000 c.f.s. It is followed by several small beaches in the next mile.

60



River Miles		Miles from Riggins
10½	BLM China Creek #1 Campground on the right opposite a Class II rock garden. The main chute is on the right. This is followed by BLM China Creek #2 Campground on the right, a Class II rapids, and a campspot on the left.	71½
12	BLM Eagle Creek Campground on the right.	70
12½	A BLM jeep road and sign become visible on the right. The road follows the river for several miles.	69½
13	Class III rapids followed by a cabin on the right and Eagle Creek.	69
14	Cottonwood Creek Rapids. Class II.	68
15½	Billy Creek Rapids, Class II. House high on the left side with a rough road paralleling the river.	66½



5

83

12

81%

81

78



River
Miles

Miles
from
Riggins

179½ Cougar Rapids, Class II, and
Cougar Bar. "Leaving National
Resource Lands" sign on the
right. Most of the land along the
river now is privately owned.

91

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River
Miles

Miles
from
Riggins

169½ Grande Ronde River. This is the first point to take out on the Snake River. Most of the water beyond here is heavily used by power boats. A road follows the river to Asotin, approximately 28 miles north. **101**

173 Wild Goose Rapids, Class III, followed by Deer Head Rapids, Class II. **97**

174 Shovel Creek Rapids, Class II. **96½**



Let's Clean Up America For Our 200th Birthday

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U. S. administration.

One-fifth of our Nation's land area — 465 million acres — is in the stewardship of the Bureau of Land Management. A storehouse of resources for the future, these national lands produce forage, fiber and forests, water and wildlife . . . and space for outdoor recreation.

Commercial and group permits may be obtained from the Bureau of Land Management, Route 3, Cottonwood, Idaho.

If you observe any problems or you want more information about the lower Salmon River Contact:

Bureau of Land Management, Resource Area Headquarters
Route No. 3
Cottonwood, Idaho 83522